

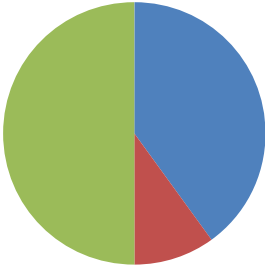
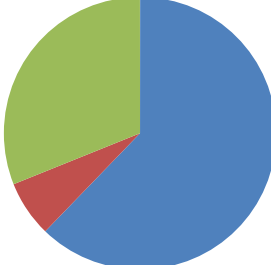


# Reduce Payment Request Error Rate

**Lean Project Progress Report: August 28, 2012**

Prepared By: Shelly McMurry and Jason Alberich

<b>Event Date</b>	June 2011		
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Coordinated Prevention Grant (CPG) program provides funding assistance to local governments for planning and implementing their local solid and hazardous waste management plans. The program also funds recycling, collecting household hazardous waste, and enforcing solid waste codes.</p> <p>Depending on funding allocation, CPG grant officers manage up to 150 agreements statewide. Ecology requires each of those local government recipients to report progress and submit quarterly payment requests for reimbursement. Each payment request can take up to four hours to review and approve. This can take longer depending on the number of errors that grant officers need to correct and/or send back to the recipient for correction.</p> <p>Once the grant officers approve the payment request, they send the request to Headquarters Waste 2 Resources (W2R) Grant Tracking Coordinator. The Grant Tracking Coordinator does a second check, making corrections before sending the request to Fiscal for processing and payment. Four people handle each of these payment request forms. Training recipients to fill the forms out properly, would reduce the amount of time it takes Ecology staff to process and expedite payments to recipients.</p> <p>At times, the error rate can be as high as 94 percent. Math errors, ineligible expenses and purchases outside the reporting period are some examples of frequent errors that staff must correct before fiscal will process the payment request.</p>		
<b>Project Objective(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our goal is to reduce the error rate on payment requests recipients being submit to Ecology for reimbursement by 20 percent.</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of errors corrected by the Grant Tracking Coordinator by having grant officers catch the majority of errors.</li> </ul>		
<b>Value Stream Mapping Outcome</b>	<b>Current Situation (Old Way)</b>	<b>Future (New Way)</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
	Grant officers are trained when they first take the job but there was no formal on-going training.	Conduct an annual grant officer payment request refresher, having them review a mocked up payment request and talking through the errors to see if they catch all the mistakes.	This hands on approach, highlights the importance of attention to detail and allows for discussion
	For recipients, grant officers provide training as needed and by communicating errors after processing payment requests.	Develop a training that is provided on a regular basis. Test several training techniques to determine which is most effective. Training techniques to be tested would include webinars, small group and individual one-on-one.	There is a set training tool available for grant officers and recipients to view from the convenience of their computer.

<b>Activities to Implement Future State</b>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The W2R Grant Tracking Coordinator trained grant officers on March 1, 2012</li> <li>• Developed and executed a webinar on March 31, 2012 for recipients which explained how to fill out the payment request forms and avoiding common errors. We recorded the webinar and posted it on our website for people who couldn't attend.</li> <li>• Confirmed reduction in payment request errors after webinar training with May Error Rate Data. Although we have yet to achieve the 20% reduction goal, the May data suggests training was effective.</li> <li>• Set up one-on-one trainings in Ecology's Eastern Regional Office (ERO), and the grant officer is tracking errors before and after training of recipients.</li> <li>• Coordinated a group training in Ecology's Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), and the grant officer is tracking errors before and after training of participants.</li> </ul> <p><b>In Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting group and one-on-one regional trainings to assess if either is more effective training tool than the webinar.</li> </ul> <p><b>Under Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of data and decision on a training plan</li> <li>• Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL), Ecology's Grants and Loan Management System has the potential to reduce payment request errors by automating electronic forms with set formulas to reduce math errors.</li> </ul>
<b>Results to Date</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Error Corrections Before</b> Recipient Training (84% Error Rate)</p>  <p>■ Grant Officer ■ W2R Grant Tracking ■ Both</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Error Corrections After</b> Recipient Training (69% Error Rate)</p>  <p>■ Grant Officer ■ W2R Grant Tracking ■ Both</p> </div> </div>
<b>Discussion about Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We saw a 15% reduction in the overall error rate from before and after the webinar training. This is 5% short of our goal of 20%.</li> <li>• Grant officer training increased the percentage of errors that they caught by 22%.</li> <li>• As we looked closer at how to track errors, we have decided to delineate between "Egregious" (an error that resulted in the grant officer needing to contact a recipient) or "Minor" (an error the grant officer can fix).</li> <li>• ERO and SWRO are testing one-on-one trainings and a group training to evaluate if there is a more effective training method.</li> <li>• We will continue to design and implement strategies to meet our ultimate goal of reducing the overall error rate by 20 percent.</li> </ul>

<b>Future Action Plan (Milestones)</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>When?</b>
	Finish group and one-on-one trainings and evaluate before and after error rates of participants.	SWRO and ERO Grant Officers	September 2012
	Evaluate results, discuss as a group and determine next steps.	CPG Coordinator and Grant Officers	September 2012
	Continue involvement in EAGL and Yellow Book update projects. Mapping Ecology grant and loan management process flow and electronic document management and workflows will help increase consistency across programs and contribute to process improvements.	CPG Coordinator	Ongoing